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BAKER'S EDITION OF PLAYS

THE TRUSTEE

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JUST PUBLISHED.

A Box of Monkeys.

A PARLOR FARCE IN TWO ACTS.

By GRACE L. FURNISS,

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SYNOPSIS:

SCENE I. Introductory. Going to school. Hookin' apples and hookin' Jack. Jokes and jollity.

SCENE II. The old "deestrick skule" house. The scholars assemble. Calling the roll. Excuses. The new boys—"Julius Call and Billious Call." The stuttering boy. The infant class. "This is a warm doughnut; tread on it." The arithmetic class. "Why does an elephant have a trunk?" A history lesson. One reason why George Washington's birthday is celebrated. A visitor. Somebody's "ma." A very delicate child. Some fun about pickles. A visit from the school committee. A school examination in "history, filoserpy, quotations, flirtations, an' kerdrilles." Head to foot. A very bad spell. Blackboard exercises. A motion song. A crush hat. More fun. A boy's composition on "boys."

Walter H. Baker & Co., 23 Winter St., Boston.

THE TRUSTEE

A Play in Four Acts

BY

WILLIAM MAYNADIER BROWNE

AUTHOR OF "A FOOL FOR LUCK" "BACHELOR'S HALL" ETC.

As originally performed by "The Players," of West Newton, Mass., at City Hall, November 24, 1890

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BOSTON

Walter H. Baker & Co.

1892

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CHARACTERS.

(As originally cast by " The Players.")

DANIEL VANE, *a man of fifty, totally blind* . . . . MR. JOHN A. CONKEY.
JOHN ALLSTON, *the trustee, contemporary and old friend of Vane* . . . . . MR. CORNELIUS WALKER.
EDWARD ELLIOT, *a retired lawyer, old friend of both Vane and Allston* . . . . . MR. MORTON. E. COBB.
DOCTOR PEACOCK, *a country doctor* . . . . . MR. T. E. STUTSON.
PHILIP BROUGHTON, *younger brother of Mrs. Allston* . . . . . MR. EDW. W. SPURR.
LANGDON (an alias), *a doubtful character* . . . . MR. JAS. WALKER, JR.
JEREMIAH MARSH, *Langdon's assistant, or so-called secretary* . . . . . MR. EDW. DEWSON.
JUDGE PETTIBONE, *trial justice of the town* . . . MR. EDW. C. BURRAGE.
CONN O'HARA, *constable* . . . . . MR. B. P. CHENEY, JR.
HUNT, *a detective* . . . . . MR. CHAS. T. DAVIS.
MRS. ALLSTON, *the trustee's wife* . . . . . MRS. WM. T. FARLEY.
BARBARA VANE, *the trustee's ward and Vane's niece* . . . . . MISS EDITH M. FARLEY.
MISS ALLSTON, *the trustee's sister* . . . . MISS FRANCIS A. RAYMOND.
MRS. PEACOCK, *the doctor's wife* . . . . MISS GEORGIANA M. HARRIS.
SUZETTE ECUER, *maid-servant in the trustee's house* . . . . . MRS. WALTER H. STEARNS.

The scene is laid in a small country town not far from New York City.

ACT I. — DRAWING-ROOM IN THE TRUSTEE'S HOUSE.
ACT II. — THE TRUSTEE'S OFFICE IN THE VILLAGE.
ACT III. — SAME AS ACT I.
ACT IV. — THE OFFICE OF THE TRIAL JUSTICE OF THE TOWN.

TIME. — *The Present.*

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TMP92-008715

THE TRUSTEE.

SCENE. — *Drawing-room in the Trustee's house. Wide entrance at back,* C., *showing hall behind, portières either side of* C. *Door at* R., *leading to conservatory, and at* L., *leading to another room. The room comfortably and plentifully furnished. A large writing-table at* R., *toward the front.*

(*Enter* SUZETTE, *cautiously, at* C. *After looking about the stage, she returns to* C., *and beckons to without.*)

(*Enter* MARSH C.)

SUZETTE (*as he enters*). Mistare Langdon ees not here, Mistare Cherry. You see. I told you so. He may be in ze conservatoire.

MARSH. Well, step in there, there's a good girl, and tell him Mr. Marsh wants to see him for a minute.

SUZETTE. Non, non, Mistare Cherry. Not yet. As Doctaire Peacock say, "you aire going too fast." Two sings first you must tell to me.

MARSH. Don't bother me now. I'm in a hurry.

SUZETTE (*folding her arms*). But I, Mistare Cherry, haf of time all zat I need.

MARSH. That's all right, Suzette; but when we're such old friends —

SUZETTE. Ha! Zat ees juste eet! I haf gr-r-eat interest in my old friend Mistare Cherry, and zerefore I ask, Who eez zis Langdon? Zat ees one question.

MARSH. He is a — well — he's an engraver.

SUZETTE. So! (*With meaning.*) Of zee green goods, ees eet?

MARSH (*nodding assent*). And now I suppose you want to know what we are doing here.

SUZETTE. Not at all, saire. You do me wrong. I haf reformed. I vish to know — how ees eet you say that — vere do I come in, eef I know nossing? Zat ees two question.

MARSH (*after a moment's reflection*). One thousand dollars for you if you say nothing.

SUZETTE. One souzand dollaire! Bien. (*Suddenly.*) But not zose Mistare Langdon make, eh? (MARSH *shakes his head.*) You may on me depend. (*Going toward door* R.) Mistare

Langdon shall know zat Mistare — ha — ha — ha — Mar-r-sh vish to see him.

(*Exit, door* R.)

MARSH. She comes high, but we must have her. She's known me too long for me to take any risks with her. (*Looking about the room.*) Nice place this ; better than the doctor's house. No fault to find with the doctor, though. He makes me and — ahem — Mr. Langdon very comfortable during our little visit.

(*Enter* LANGDON *and* SUZETTE R. SUZETTE *hangs about for a moment, but upon* LANGDON'S *watching her, she shrugs her shoulders and exit* C.)

LANGDON. Well, what do you want of me?

MARSH. Well, I'll tell you what I want of you, Tom Drake. (LANGDON *raises his fists threateningly.*) Oh, drop that! I can do that too.

LANGDON (*quieting down*). All right, but don't call me that, here.

MARSH. Excuse *me*, Mr. Langdon. But I have worked in the dark as long as I'm going to.

LANGDON. You said you'd let me run the thing.

MARSH. And *you* said you wanted me to come up here and help you place sixty thousand of the queer. Now, I know you've made all the arrangements to buy this chemical mill of Allston's, and I know you intend to pay for it with the same old stuff, but what I don't know is this, — how do you expect to sell the mill again and get good money for it, before the bank finds out that the bills you paid for it are queer? That's what I want to know.

LANGDON. The bank will never find out.

MARSH. You're crazy. They'd know 'em in a minute.

LANGDON. The bank will never see them.

MARSH. You mean —

LANGDON. I mean we get them back again. Allston will have to put them in the safe in his office in the village, because there's no bank here. There's nobody in his office at night except Vane, this blind man. It won't be hard to take care of him, and he can't see who does the job. We crack the safe, take the bills, back to bed at the doctor's, and who is going to suspect Mr. Langdon, the buyer of the property? Now, am I crazy?

MARSH (*admiringly*). Not you, Tom, I swear! (*Suddenly.*) But wait! Those blind fellows can feel what they can't see!

LANGDON. That's so.

MARSH. I have it. You must wear that coat of Allston's, the one trimmed with fur, and if Vane feels that, it will throw him way off the scent. Suzette will fix that for us.

LANGDON. How do you know she will?

MARSH. Old partner of mine — reformed.

LANGDON. Is she safe?
MARSH. Yes. I've fixed her.
LANGDON. Hark! Some one's coming. Go.

(*Exit* MARSH, *quickly*, L.)

(LANGDON *takes position against back, by door* C. *at* R. *Enter* MRS. ALLSTON *and* PHILIP C.)

MRS. ALLSTON (*excitedly, as they enter*). No, Philip. (*Catching him by the hand and bringing him down, neither seeing* LANGDON.) I am in awful trouble, and I want you to help me.
PHILIP (*putting his arm around her*). Dora! my sister! You may rely upon me. Tell me all about it.

(MRS. ALLSTON *hesitates a moment as if to recover her senses. While she hesitates,* LANGDON *quietly conceals himself behind portière of door* C.)

MRS. ALLSTON. Let me sit down. I feel faint.
PHILIP (*helping her to chair* R.). There, dear. Take your time, and depend upon it, I will help you if it's a possible thing.
MRS. ALLSTON (*agitated*). Just a week ago I received a letter — an anonymous letter — Oh, I hate to tell you, Philip. It referred to that wretched, horrible time when I — I thought I was married to —
PHILIP. Hush, Dora! Don't speak his name. (*Rising excitedly, with clinched hands.*) If he hadn't died by God's will, I would have —
MRS. ALLSTON. Philip! Philip! What are you saying?
PHILIP. Well, never mind, dear. That is past. Go on.
MRS. ALLSTON. This letter — I cannot forget one word of it — I must tell you all it said. (*Rising and coming close to him.*) I can see it *now*. "It is reasonable to suppose that you would be unwilling to have Mr. Allston made aware of the fact that your first husband had another wife living when he married you, and that, in addition to this, he was a professional bank thief. To prevent Mr. Allston's being informed of your history, it is only necessary to send a personal to the New York *Herald*, stating where T. D. can call and receive $5,000. In case you are unable to raise this amount, the matter can be settled by your giving some slight information in regard to Mr. Allston's safe to one of your former husband's old friends." That was the letter, word for word.
PHILIP. Miserable hound! What did you do?
MRS. ALLSTON. I did nothing, intending to tell John everything, give him the letter, and let him put the whole matter in the hands of the police; but that very evening he heard that there was a rumor that the mine was flooded, and he would lose everything. He was so worried, Phil, I hadn't the heart to tell him then. I have waited since, hoping he might get better news, and —

PHILIP. Dora, dear, you ought to have told Mr. Allston your history long ago.

MRS. ALLSTON. I *did* try to, Philip, when he asked me to be his wife. I would have told him how I had myself and my little brother to support, — for you were little then, Phil, — I would have told him how I was so poor I did not know what would become of us; how that man offered us a comfortable home; how from the wife he had deserted I learned that I was not a wife, that he was a wretched criminal; and I would have told my husband, my dear John, how that very day we fled from that horrible house and came to this village to live. All this I would have told my husband. *tried* to tell him before I became his wife, but he wouldn't listen; said that it was enough for him to know that my past had been unhappy, and to have the privilege of making me forget it in his love.

PHILIP. That was like him, Dora.

MRS. ALLSTON. But I haven't told you the worst. I have searched everywhere, and I cannot find the letter.

PHILIP. Do you think it has been stolen?

MRS. ALLSTON. No, no. I am certain John has taken it by mistake, with some papers about Barbara's estate. This morning I was reading the letter again, and laid it on the desk for a minute while I was out of the room, and when I came back John was there tying up his papers. He has not read the letter, I am sure, but to-morrow, when he has to use the papers, he will find it.

PHILIP. Take my advice, and tell him all about it.

MRS. ALLSTON (*with distress*). I can't Philip. I can't now. Then, it would have been easier, but now that I love him so, I cannot give him pain — now, when he is in so much trouble.

PHILIP. Then how can I help you?

MRS. ALLSTON. Go to the office, and get the letter back for me from the safe. Only Mr. Vane will be there, and you can make some explanation to him.

PHILIP. But the safe? How can I unlock the safe?

MRS. ALLSTON (*eagerly*). I can tell you that. John showed me how to do it. (*Hurriedly.*) The letters are D-O-R-A, my name. You turn the dial first to D, then back, all the way round three times, then —

PHILIP (*interrupting*). You'd better write it, dear. I may forget.

MRS. ALLSTON (*seating herself at table and writing hurriedly*). Philip, dear, it is so good of you. I can never thank you enough (*Rising and giving him the paper.*)

PHILIP. Never mind about that, Dora. I will do it, if you wish. I suppose any time this evening will do?

MRS. ALLSTON (*eagerly*). Yes, yes. (*Starting to leave the room.*)

PHILIP (*following and stopping her*). Think again, Dora. Hadn't you better take my advice?

MRS. ALLSTON. No, no, no, — please! (*Exeunt* C.)

LANGDON (*coming out cautiously from behind portière*). I was afraid my letter wouldn't work, but after all, Mrs. Allston (*laughing*), you have answered it unawares. Dora! That's all I need to know. Ha! (*Looking toward door* L.) Here comes the trustee. Now for the purchase. Ha, ha! This is a beautiful idea of mine, if it only works.

(*Enter* MR. ALLSTON L. *He carries in his hands numerous papers, books, accounts, etc., and goes to the table at* R.)

ALLSTON (*looking over papers*). Well, Mr. Langdon, I think I have everything here, and we may as well finish the business, since you are satisfied to accept my inventory of the machinery and tools and fixtures.

LANGDON. Perfectly satisfied, Mr. Allston. In fact, I am quite ready to pass the papers now, and complete the purchase. My secretary has everything that I need for the purpose.

ALLSTON. Very well, sir, if you say so. It's delightful to settle a matter of this sort with so little — in fact, no disagreement. I must say, Mr. Langdon, you are an ideal purchaser.

LANGDON. Thank you. I always try to do everything as smoothly as possible. Besides, the property is so exactly suited to my wants, that I am only too glad to get it at your price.

ALLSTON (*as he arranges papers*). Well, it's only one more good thing for which I have to thank my old friend, Doctor Peacock. I'm sure *I* could never have found so good a customer for my ward's property. Have you known Dr. Peacock long, Mr. Langdon?

LANGDON. Oh, no! In fact, 'twas only the other day I introduced myself to him in New York, in order to discuss with him a matter of chemistry, and one thing led to another, until I happened to mention that I wanted to buy a piece of manufacturing property in some small town, where I could conduct some important scientific experiments, and the doctor insisted upon my coming here to look at this, and I find it suits me exactly.

(*Enter* ELLIOT C.)

ALLSTON. Ah, Ned! You're just in time to witness my signature. This is Mr. Langdon. (*To* LANGDON.) My very old friend, Mr. Elliot. (*To* ELLIOT.) Mr. Langdon has decided to buy Barbara's factory, Ned, and we are just about to sign the papers.

ELLIOT. Well, John, my boy, I'm glad to hear it. (*To* LANGDON.) My friend Allston must regard you as something akin to a ministering angel, sir.

ALLSTON. Yes, indeed. After fifteen-years' management of the business for my ward, I am only too glad to dispose of it to her advantage — and to my relief. But that reminds me. With your permission, Mr. Langdon, I will send for Miss Vane, and explain to her what I am about to do with her property. (*Rings.*)

LANGDON. Certainly.

ALLSTON. She has just come of age to-day, and I have some other papers here that need her signature, and I can clean up the whole thing now.

(*Enter* SUZETTE C.)

SUZETTE. Deed you r-ring, Mr. Allstone?

ALLSTON. Be good enough to ask Miss Vane to come here for a minute.

(SUZETTE *exit* C.)

ALLSTON (*putting his hand on* ELLIOT'S *shoulder*). It's good to have you with us again, old man, if only for a flying visit.

ELLIOT. Couldn't let my little friend Barbara's twenty-first birthday go by without *my* being here, you know.

ALLSTON. That's right. (*To* LANGDON.) You see, Mr. Langdon, Mr. Elliot is a great admirer of my ward.

LANGDON. And with good reason, I've no doubt.

ELLIOT. Ah, you may well say so, sir! If I were a younger man, and hadn't vowed to be a bachelor all my life, I'd —

(*Enter* BARBARA C.)

BARBARA. You'd be simply perfect, Mr. Elliot.

ELLIOT (*going to meet her with both hands extended*). Thank you, my dear. (*Holding her by the hands.*) Well, well, well! How time does fly, to be sure! Twenty-one to-day, I declare! Ahem! Too old for the usual custom, my dear? Eh?

BARBARA (*laughing*). *I'm* not, if you mean me.

ELLIOT (*kissing her*). There, you minx, neither am I.

ALLSTON (*from position by the writing-table*). Now, Ned, let that girl alone. Barbara, dear, this is Mr. Langdon. (*They bow.*) And now come and sit here (*placing chair for her by the table*), and listen to me carefully, for I intend to tell you all about your own affairs. I want you to understand all about them.

(ELLIOT *has seated himself with a book, in an easy-chair at* L.)

BARBARA. Very well, Uncle John, I'll listen, but I won't promise to understand one word of it.

ELLIOT (*from chair*). That's right, my dear, stick to that!

ALLSTON. When your father, who was my dearest friend —

ELLIOT (*from chair*). And mine.

ALLSTON. Yes, and Elliot's. When your father died, fifteen years ago, he left all his money invested in the factory here, and in his will bequeathed the entire property to you as his heir, and named me as trustee to take charge of the business of the factory. To-day you are twenty-one, and I have here all the accounts and

papers to present to the court to show how I have managed this property.

BARBARA. But, Uncle John, I don't want the factory. What in the world can *I* do with a factory?

ALLSTON. Wait a minute, my dear. That's just what I am coming to. Your father foresaw this difficulty, and by a clause in the will directs me to sell the property at whatever time during the year before or the year after your twenty-first birthday I may consider most advantageous for you. When the property first came into my hands, it was appraised at fifteen thousand dollars. To-day, by the books, it is worth sixty thousand dollars.

BARBARA. Why, Uncle John, how could you do that?

ALLSTON. Never mind, my dear. It's all shown in these papers. During the past year I have been unable to find any one to buy the property at what I considered a fair price; but to-day Mr. Langdon has offered me sixty thousand dollars, and I have sold the property to him. That is all that it is necessary for you to know for the present; and now I want you to write your name two or three times, and then I won't bother you any longer.

(*Enter* PHILIP C.)

PHILIP (*as he enters*). Oh, here you are!

ELLIOT (*still seated*). Yes, I am here, my boy. (*Holding out his hand.*) How do you do?

PHILIP (*coming to him*). Hello, Mr. Elliot. I didn't know *you* were here.

ELLIOT (*laughing*). Then it wasn't I you were looking for. Eh? Well, well, I don't blame you. If I were your age, I suppose I should run after her myself.

(*During the foregoing*, ALLSTON, LANGDON, *and* BARBARA *have been occupied with the papers at the table.*)

ALLSTON (*placing a paper before* BARBARA). Now sign here, dear. There! That's all.

BARBARA (*rising*). I had no idea it was so easy to sell a factory.

ALLSTON (*to* ELLIOT). Now, Ned! If you will, please? (ELLIOT *rises and goes to table, and signs as witness, etc.*)

BARBARA (*to* PHILIP, *excitedly*). O Philip, Uncle John has sold the factory!

PHILIP. Yes, I supposed he would. Come and take a walk.

BARBARA (*with pretended importance*). You forget that I have a great deal of business to attend to.

PHILIP. Why, they don't need *you* any longer.

BARBARA (*bridling*). How do *you* know, sir? My presence here has been greatly needed.

PHILIP. And your presence out there (*pointing off*) will be greatly appreciated.

BARBARA. But will it be needed, too?

PHILIP. Imperatively!

BARBARA. Then I suppose I really ought to go. (*Starting toward door* C. *with* PHILIP.)

ELLIOT (*calling after them*). Don't wait for me. I'll find you later.

PHILIP (*as he goes out*). If you can!

(*Exit* C. *with* BARBARA. ELLIOT *shakes his fist at him, laughing good-naturedly.*)

LANGDON (*who has been looking over papers with* ALLSTON). Now all that you need is sixty thousand dollars from me. I sent my secretary for it, and he should be here now. Excuse me one moment. I will go and find him. (*Exit* C.)

ELLIOT. Jack, old man, I got your letter about the mine, and went to see your bankers, as you asked me to do. (*Putting his hand on* ALLSTON'S *shoulder.*) I wish I had some encouraging news for you.

ALLSTON. Is the rumor true, then? Is the mine flooded?

ELLIOT. They say they are not entirely sure of it yet, but that it looks like it. Was *all* your money in it, John?

ALLSTON. Every dollar, — except what's in this house.

ELLIOT. Too bad, too bad!

ALLSTON. Better news may come later. I must at least seem to be in good spirits on Barbara's birthday. Thank Heaven her property is not affected!

(*Enter* LANGDON C., *with* MARSH *carrying hand-bag.*)

LANGDON (*taking bag from* MARSH, *as he comes down*). I think this will supply all that is necessary. (*Placing hand-bag on the table.*) I have here, Mr. Allston, all that is needed to complete what has been to me, I assure you, a very pleasant transaction. (*Taking several packages of bills from the hand-bag.* MARSH *looking on with evident uneasiness.*) There! I think you will find that that is the right amount.

ALLSTON (*taking up a package from the table*). But you surely do not expect to pay with these?

LANGDON (*excitedly and nervously*). Why — yes. Why not? They're — er all right, aren't they?

MARSH (*aside to* LANGDON). Keep cool. Keep cool.

ALLSTON. Certainly — but I had supposed —

ELLIOT. It's rather unusual to pay such an amount in bills.

LANGDON (*reassured*). Well, perhaps it is; but, you see, being a stranger to you, I hardly liked to offer my check in payment. (*Aside to* MARSH.) Was that cool?

ALLSTON. Oh, well, of course I can't object, Mr. Langdon. The only reason I remarked upon the manner of payment is because, in a small town like this we have no banking facilities, and I shall be obliged to take care of all this money until I can send it to the city.

LANGDON (*earnestly*). Haven't you a safe — at your office?

ALLSTON. Yes, I have a safe there, but hardly burglar proof.

ELLIOT. Oh, there'll be no danger for one night, Jack. Not a particle. Safe as a church — safer!

ALLSTON. Yes, you're right. No one but ourselves will know that it's in the safe. Besides, Vane will be there. Poor Vane! (LANGDON *and* MARSH *exchange glances.*)

(*Exit* MARSH C.)

ALLSTON (*to* LANGDON). You must know, Mr. Langdon, that this Mr. Vane of whom we are speaking is a very old and dear friend of Mr. Elliot's and mine, and is my ward's uncle; for although Barbara calls me Uncle John, I am no relation to her. Well, some years ago Mr. Vane was one of the victims of a railroad accident, and entirely lost his sight, and from that time he has lived alone by himself, until a month ago, when we persuaded him to come to us, so as to be near Barbara. He came, but insists upon sleeping in a room adjoining my office, because, as he says, he can find his way about more easily there.

LANGDON. And he is there all alone at night, then?

ALLSTON. Yes, poor fellow! All alone. He *will* have it so. What is now my office, he used as his room when he lived with us years ago, and I suppose the old associations of it attract him.

ELLIOT. Poor, poor Vane! I can remember him when he was young, handsome, active — everything to look forward to. And now, all is dark to him.

(*Enter* MISS ALLSTON *and* VANE C., *she guiding him. As they enter*, ELLIOT *crosses to* L., *and stands apart.*)

ALLSTON (*as* MISS A. *and* VANE *come down*). Ah, Vane! Once in a while you let us enjoy the pleasure of having you in the house. This is Mr. Langdon.

VANE (*bowing, and not seeing* LANGDON'S *outstretched hand, turns toward* ELLIOT). Who else is here?

ELLIOT. See if you can guess? (*Going to him, and taking his right hand.*)

(MISS ALLSTON *is engaging* LANGDON *in conversation near the table and he does not notice the ensuing.*)

VANE (*his face lightening*). Elliot! Is it you, old friend? I know the voice — and the *hand*. (*Holding up slightly* ELLIOT'S *right hand, which he has retained in his, and resting his left hand upon* ELLIOT'S *shoulder.*)

ELLIOT (*warmly*). My dear old Vane! I would lose it gladly, if —

VANE (*interrupting*). Hush! Don't say that. Hands are precious things. (*Releasing* ELLIOT'S *hand, and holding both his own before him.*) I *see* with these!

MISS ALLSTON (*crossing to* VANE). Now, Mr. Vane, I want you to have a comfortable seat. (*Gently guiding him to arm-chair*

at L., *and in little ways caring for his comfort.*) I shall be near you.

VANE (*seated*). You are always so kind, so good to me. Do you pity me?

MISS ALLSTON. With all my heart.

VANE (*aside*). Pity! I wish it were not pity. (*Aloud to her.*) Thank you.

(*Enter* MRS. ALLSTON C.)

ALLSTON (*with enthusiasm, as he sees his wife enter*). Ha! ha! Here she is. (*Going to her and leading her down gallantly.*) Mr. Langdon, allow me to present you to (*proudly*) my wife.

MRS. ALLSTON (*bowing*). Have you and my husband settled your affairs amicably, Mr. Langdon?

LANGDON. Wonderfully so, madam.

MRS. ALLSTON. That is very nice, I am sure. And now I hope you will stay and have a cup of tea with us?

LANGDON. I should be most happy, but I am afraid Mrs. Peacock, whose guest I am, may be wondering what has become of me.

MRS. ALLSTON. You need not worry on that score. Mrs. Peacock and the doctor will soon be here themselves. (*Crossing to* VANE *and taking his hand.*) It's a great pleasure to us to have you here, Mr. Vane. I wish you would come to the house oftener.

VANE. Thank you, my dear. It's not that I don't want to come, but it takes me some time to learn new places. I shall congratulate Barbara when she comes, and then I shall go back.

(*Enter* DR. PEACOCK C.)

DR. P. (*coming down briskly rubbing his hands*). Well, well, this is delightful. How are you all?

MRS. ALLSTON. Very well, thank you, doctor; and always glad to see *you.*

DR. P. (*as he shakes hands with her*). Sweetly said, my dear Mrs. Allston. Very sweetly said. I may say, as sweetly said as anything I ever heard.

MRS. ALLSTON. But where is Mrs. Peacock?

DR. P. She is coming under the escort of the so-called Judge Pettibone, and it serves them both right.

ALLSTON (*as if to draw him out, laughing*). But he *is* a judge, doctor?

DR. P. Now wait, you're going too fast. (*Addressing himself to all.*) I agree that he has been appointed to fill the position of trial justice of the township; so far, so good. But *does* he fill it? No, sir. He rattles round in it, sir! And even then I doubt if the position is aware that he is in it, sir.

ALLSTON. Doctor, I'm afraid you're uncurable.

(MRS. A. *and* MISS A. *are engaged at the table* R., *arranging tea, etc.* ELLIOT *standing by* VANE, *talking with him. Enter* BARBARA L.)

DR. P. (*seeing her as she enters*). Ha! Here is the fundamental cause of all this excitement. The cause of the — ahem — gathering as it were. Excuse my medical way of speaking, my dear. (*Shaking her hand.*)

BARBARA. But what do you prescribe, doctor?

DR. P. Frequent application of — (*Kissing her hand.*)

ELLIOT (*coming up behind them*). Now, my dear doctor! If you will please call on the next patient!

DR. P. (*with a show of resistance*). But, my dear sir, this is a very interesting case, and I —

ELLIOT. But I have a great secret to tell the young lady.

DR. P. Ah! I'll leave you then. But I'll call again, Miss Barbara. (*Crosses to* R.)

ELLIOT (*apart to* BARBARA). Barbara, my dear, when you have time, I want you to feel in the right-hand pocket of my overcoat in the hall. I *think* I left something there.

(*Enter* PHILIP C.)

ELLIOT. You may show it to your friend Philip, and see if he considers it a suitable present for a young lady of twenty-one.

BARBARA (*ecstatically*). O Mr. Elliot! You dear — (*Starting toward him.*)

ELLIOT. Careful! Careful! Here he is himself. (*Runs away from her, across to* R., *laughing.*)

PHILIP (*at* L., *apart to her*). Barbara, dear (*taking her hands*), I, too, have a birthday present for you, and if you will accept it you will make me more happy than I can tell you.

(*During the ensuing dialogue between* BARBARA *and* PHILIP *the others are variously occupied in such ways as ladies and gentlemen would be apt to be at an informal tea.*)

BARBARA. I have always liked to receive a present from you Philip.

PHILIP. And will you receive this one, whatever it may be?

BARBARA. How can I without any hands?

PHILIP (*letting her right hand fall*). You may have that hand (*taking a ring from his pocket*), but I want this one. (*Holding up her left hand.*)

BARBARA (*looking down*). Why, what do you mean?

PHILIP. I mean that I want a birthday too. Not of my love — that came long ago; the birthday of my happiness. (*Holding up the ring.*) May I?

BARBARA. A ring! (*Drawing away her left hand confusedly.*) O Philip! really — I — I — couldn't.

PHILIP. You don't love me, then?

BARBARA (*eagerly*). Oh, I didn't say that. I mean — I — (*Starts to run away from him;* PHILIP *catches her.*)

PHILIP. Ah, sweetheart, you know you love me. Why not wear the pledge?

BARBARA (*confused*). Philip, dear, please. Let me go now. To-morrow, I will tell you.

PHILIP. Promise?

BARBARA. Yes. (*Starting to cross to* R.)

PHILIP. O Barbara! (*She turns.*) Will you keep it, or shall I?

BARBARA. Oh, well! perhaps *I'd* better. (*Holding out her hand with averted face.* PHILIP *drops the ring into her hand.*) You might lose it.

VANE (*from chair, as she is crossing*). Barbara?

BARBARA (*running back quickly to him and kneeling by his side*). Why, Uncle Daniel! To think that I should have forgotten *you!*

VANE (*resting his hand upon her head*). Never mind, my dear child. I wish you every happiness, every comfort, all peace. (*Drawing her to him and kissing her.*) May God bless you, my sweet one! (*Rises as if to go.*)

BARBARA. O Uncle Dan! Don't go yet. Stay and have a cup of tea in honor of my birthday. Please.

(VANE *resumes his seat, and* BARBARA *crosses to* R. *Enter* MRS. PEACOCK *and* JUDGE PETTIBONE. *They are received pleasantly up stage.*)

LANGDON (*aside*). Ha! Good idea. I'll try it. (*Goes quickly to* DR. PEACOCK, *who is standing apart at front.*) Doctor, do you happen to have some sort of opiate or sleeping-draught about you?

DR. P. (*taking from his pocket a medicine wallet*). *Semper paratus.* Always prepared for an emergency. What do you want it for?

LANGDON. I have been troubled for years with sudden attacks of pain, feel one coming on now. (*Wincing.*) I must take something, or I sha'n't sleep a wink to-night.

DR. P. Bless me! You're not going to take it now, are you?

LANGDON. No, no. But the pain may get so bad any minute that I shall have to go to the house.

DR. P. (*giving him a small vial*). There! That'll fix you. Twenty drops, and you will sleep like a child. (*To himself, as he replaces wallet in his pocket.*) Indigestion! Not a doubt of it! (*Takes from his pocket a handkerchief with large knot tied in the corner, looking at it.*) Hello! Now what the devil did I tie that knot for? (*Scratching his head.*) Well, it will come to me later. Never knew it to fail. (*Crosses to* VANE *and talks with him.*)

(LANGDON, *as soon as he receives the opiate, goes quickly to table,* R., *and gets a cup of tea,* MISS ALLSTON *being busy pouring out other cups. As the* DOCTOR *crosses to* VANE, LANGDON, *with his back to the others, pours some of the opiate into the cup he has taken and crosses to* VANE *at* L.)

LANGDON (*aside, as he pours in the opiate*). This will smooth the way to the safe. (*Aloud.*) Mr. Vane, let me give you a cup of tea.

MISS A. (*who has crossed just behind him, cup in hand*). No, no, Mr. Langdon; excuse me. (*Passing between him and* VANE, *putting her cup into* VANE'S *hand, then turning to* LANGDON.) Mr. Vane is so used to me, you know. Keep that for yourself.

LANGDON (*taken aback*). But really — you see — I — I — never drink tea.

MISS A. Let me have it then, please. (LANGDON, *confused, hands her the cup.*) Here, doctor, do you want some of my tea?

DR. P. (*who has been puzzling over the knot*). Do I, Miss Eleanor! The idea of your asking such a question. (*Takes the cup.*)

MISS A. Of course I know you like tea very much.

DR. P. Now wait. You're going too fast. There is tea, and tea. Some tea I don't like, but when I get your tea! Well! There! *Then* I know *just* what I'm getting.

MISS A. Doctor, you're a flatterer.

DR. P. Not at all, my dear Miss Eleanor. Honest admiration of you in all things, I assure you — Ahem! (*To call the attention of all hands.*) Now, Miss Barbara! At last I have a cup of tea, and can propose a toast. Let me see! In the bev —

MRS. P. (*interrupting*). Now, Peacock, if you will be good enough to let some one else say a word. Judge Pettibone has a few remarks to make on this occasion. An occasion of great interest to us all.

DR. P. That's more than you can say for his remarks.

MRS. P. (*severely*). Peacock, you forget yourself.

DR. P. That's more than he ever does.

JUDGE (*standing* C., *with cup in hand, pompously*). My friends, on an occasion like the present, when a human being arrives at the period of majority, it seems fitting that I, as the embodiment of the law, should wish that person a life of rectitude, sobriety, and decorum under the law. May you enjoy all this, Miss Vane, and more.

DR. P. (*derisively*). More! More! (*Holding up his teacup.*) Now it's *my* turn. Miss Barbara, in the beverage of the celestials, allow me to pledge a heavenly being.

BARBARA. Oh, you dear man!

DR. P. May you live forever, entirely free from indigestion.

BARBARA. Thank you, doctor, but you forget — heavenly beings never have indigestion.

DR. P. Now wait. You're going too fast. They do have it, but they never feel it on account of the ether. Very many happy returns of the day, my dear. (*Drains his cup.*)

ALL. Bravo! Bravo!

LANGDON (*aside*). I've hit the wrong bird.

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE. — *Office of the trustee. Door* C. *To the left of door* C. *a large iron safe. To the right of door* C. *a window (practical). Another door at* L. *Open fireplace at* R. *Desks, chairs, etc., about the office. A high-backed easy-chair by the fire. Maps, etc., on the walls. A table at* L. C. VANE *discovered sitting by the firelight, in the easy-chair, with his back to the window.*

VANE. Fifteen years ago to-day — fifteen years! To me it has seemed fifty! The train was rushing on, bearing me, full of happiness, flushed with hope, to lay my heart at my loved one's feet. A tremor, a sudden shock, and next — I knew that my sight was gone, my hope was killed. Others died then. Alas! I must live, a helpless, useless thing (*bitterly*), a pretty thing on which to ask my lady to bestow her love — for pity's sake. And now again I'm with her day by day. Her voice as clear, as sweet as then; her hand as soft and warm; her touch, for pity's sake, more tender. My heart as eager in its beat as then, my love for her as true and strong, myself unworthy her acceptance, save for pity's sake. Fool! to come here now to breathe the fragrance of a flower I cannot see to pluck. And yet, I am happier —

(*The window at* R. *is softly opened.* LANGDON *and* MARSH *climb in noiselessly, and steal on tiptoe toward* VANE.)

— or less wretched — yes, less wretched here. (*Suddenly.*) I feel a draught. (*Starting to spring from his chair.*) Who's that?

(LANGDON, *from behind, forces* VANE *back into the chair, and, after a struggle, gags him. During the struggle* VANE *passes his hand over the sleeve of* LANGDON'S *coat, and, in resisting him, holds him by both hands; but his arms are pulled down by* MARSH, *and* LANGDON *thus succeeds in gagging him. He is then bound in the chair.* LANGDON *then goes to the safe, which he opens by the combination. Takes the packages of money,* MARSH *meanwhile keeping watch by the window, in evident anxiety. The money taken,* LANGDON *gives part to* MARSH, *and they go out as they came in, closing the window softly after them. The safe doors are left open. Throughout the scene not a word is spoken by either man, and they walk on tiptoe. After a slight pause, during which* VANE *struggles ineffectually, the sound of a key in the door is heard.*)

(*Enter* PHILIP C.)

PHILIP. Mr. Vane not here? He must have gone to bed. It's just as well. (*Takes the paper from his pocket.*) Now for the

combination. (*Turns toward safe.*) Hello! The safe open! What does this mean? The money! (*Going to safe, and looking hurriedly through it. Then, as he turns.*) Gone! Stolen! (*Walks quickly down. Sees* VANE.) Ha! (*Rushing to him.*) Mr. Vane, are you hurt? Gagged! (*Crumples the paper in his hand, and unconsciously throws it on the floor beside the chair, then quickly ungags and unbinds him, letting the handkerchief with which he was bound drop in his,* VANE'S, *lap. For a moment* VANE *is unable to speak.*) What has happened? Tell me. It is I, Philip.

VANE. I know it is you. The safe! The money! Robbed! Don't stay here with me. Quick! You may catch them. They went out the window. (*As* PHILIP *rushes off.*) Get help! (*Exit* PHILIP C. *Still sitting, holding in his hand the handkerchief. After a short period of intense thought, throwing himself back in the chair despairingly.*) It puzzles me. My eyes! my eyes! With them I could have told. 'Twas John's coat — I felt it! Why am I so sure it was not John himself? I do not know. I am puzzled — all at sea — but, by Heaven, it was not John! (*Rising and standing in front of chair.*) This handkerchief! Whose is it? (*Puts it in his pocket.*) And there were two of them. I must wait — I must think. (*Taking a step toward* L.) I must say nothing. (*Another step, then holding up his hands.*) I must *feel* my way. (*Another step, placing his foot upon the crumpled piece of paper dropped by* PHILIP. *Stops suddenly.*) What's this? (*Picks paper up.*) A piece of paper. Perhaps they dropped it. (*Puts it in his pocket, raising both hands to his temples, as in intense thought.*) I *know* it was not John, but I must say nothing. I must wait and see. (*Laughs ironically.*) See? No, no, — not I! (*Several quick, firm steps are heard on the gravel outside. At sound of steps.*) Hark! It's John.

(*Enter* ALLSTON C.)

VANE. Did you meet Philip?

ALLSTON. Philip? No; I am on the hunt for Peacock. He has disappeared, and his wife asked me to look for him. But you are dark here. Let's have some light.

VANE. Wait, John! Come here — your arm. (ALLSTON, *puzzled, goes to him and gives him his arm.* VANE *passes his hand once quickly down the sleeve, then aside.*) I knew it. Thank God! (*Aloud.*) To my chair, please. (ALLSTON *leads him to his chair.*)

ALLSTON (*while lighting candles*). I suppose the doctor has not been here? He disappeared just before dinner.

VANE. Look at the safe, John.

ALLSTON (*as he turns and sees the safe*). Open? What does it mean?

VANE. The money!

ALLSTON (*with a gasp*). Not gone?

VANE. Yes — stolen.

ALLSTON (*after looking hurriedly through the safe*). Gone! All gone! The money is gone! (*Standing erect with a bundle of papers in his hand.*) But, thank Heaven, the proofs of my honest trusteeship are here! (*Suddenly taking a paper from the package.*) What paper is this? That's not one of mine. (*Goes to table at* L., *and reads letter by the candles, muttering as he reads.*) "Your first husband," — "another wife living," — "a professional bank thief," — "Allston's safe!" Merciful Heaven! My wife, the — and he a felon. Can this be true? (*Glancing at safe.*) Can *she* have —

VANE (*from the chair*). What else has happened, John?

ALLSTON (*with a start*). Nothing, nothing more, Dan. My loss unmans me. (*Aside.*) Is *everything* lost? My trust, my love? (*With great feeling.*) No, no; never while God lets me live will I believe it. All this about her past may be true. I knew it had been unhappy, poor child. She herself may have put this letter here for me to see, rather than tell me — but that she should have agreed to its infamous proposals — that she should have plotted against my fortunes, she who loved me! Never, never! Shame — shame on me for the thought!

(*During the last few words, steps are heard on walk. Enter* MRS. PEACOCK C., *out of breath.*)

MRS. P. (*panting*). Have you — found him? Is he — here? (*Looking about the office.*) O Peacock! Peacock! To leave me in this way without a word! (*To* ALLSTON.) You look worried, alarmed. Do you suspect — suicide? (*Rushing to him excitedly.*) Perhaps you *know*. Tell me the worst.

ALLSTON. You are giving yourself needless anxiety, Mrs. Peacock. I assure you I know nothing about the doctor. I have no doubt he was suddenly called to see a patient.

MRS. P. What! Go to see a patient without telling me first who was sick! The idea! You don't know me, sir.

ALLSTON. However that may be, Mrs Peacock, and much as I sympathize with your feelings in the matter, I must really ask you to leave us. The fact is, I am — I have met with a great misfortune.

MRS. P. What do you mean?

VANE. Confound the woman! Will she never go?

ALLSTON. I have been robbed — all Barbara's money is stolen. (*Points to the safe.*)

MRS. P. (*in great excitement*). A robbery! And Peacock missing! I see it all. (*Rushes out. Exit* C.)

ALLSTON (*turning quickly to* VANE). Tell me. were you here when it happened?

VANE (*in chair*). Here in this chair — seized from behind, gagged, and bound. Philip came and released me. He has gone for help, to try to catch them.

ALLSTON. Them? Was there more than one?

VANE. Yes; there were two.

ALLSTON (*after a moment's hesitation*). Men?

VANE. Men? Of course. No woman could have done it.

ALLSTON (*aside*). Suspicious fool! (*Aloud.*) And you have no idea who they were?

VANE. Not the least. (*Taking paper from his pocket.*) But I found this on the floor, after they had gone. (*Holding it out to him.*) It may be a clew.

ALLSTON (*having taken the paper from him and walked to* L., *glances at it, then trembling, aside*). My wife! Her writing! The combination! *She* has betrayed me! (*Sinks, sobbing, into chair by the table, letting his head fall upon his arms.*)

VANE. Does it prove anything, John? Is it a clew?

ALLSTON (*lifting his head, speaking hurriedly*). No, no, nothing — absolutely nothing.

VANE. I thought you seemed agitated.

ALLSTON. My loss — it's my loss, Dan. (*Aside.*) What I hold dearest in all the world is lost. (*His head sinks upon his arms.*)

(*Enter* MISS ALLSTON *and* ELLIOT C. MISS ALLSTON *goes quickly to* VANE; ELLIOT *walks less quickly to* ALLSTON, *and stands with his hand on* ALLSTON'S *shoulder.*)

MISS A. (*as she reaches* VANE). Are you hurt? Did they hurt you?

VANE. No, no. Tell me, what is John doing?

MISS A. He is sitting at the table, with his head buried in his arms.

VANE (*aside, slowly shaking his head*). It was not he — it was not he.

ELLIOT. John, old friend, look up. It can't be helped. (ALLSTON *does not move.*)

(*Enter* PHILIP C., *hurriedly.*)

PHILIP (*excited*). No trace — not a sign. I stopped at Pettibone's, and he has sent men out in all directions.

(*Enter* MRS. ALLSTON *and* BARBARA C.)

MRS. A. (*going quickly to her husband and kneeling by him, followed by* BARBARA, *who stands beside him*). John! Dear John! I am so sorry, dear. Speak to me, John. Let me help you bear it.

ALLSTON (*springing up suddenly, catching her by the hand, and drawing her quickly to* C., *then, aside to her in hurried tones*). Not another word to me — you have broken my heart. I know everything. (*She starts.*) You needn't fear; I'll not betray you. Your secret is safe with me. Go to your brother.

(MRS. ALLSTON *crosses to* PHILIP *quickly, much disturbed.*)

MRS. A. (*aside to him*). You didn't get it, Phil?

PHILIP (*aside to her*). The letter? No.

MRS. A. (*aside to him*). He has read it. (*Lets her head fall upon his shoulder. He puts his arm around her and comforts her. During the foregoing passage between* MRS. ALLSTON *and* PHILIP, ALLSTON *has resumed his seat, but not his former position.*)

BARBARA (*resting her hand on* ALLSTON'S *shoulder*). Never mind, Uncle John. What difference does it make? I shall be just as happy without it.

ALLSTON (*placing his hand upon hers, remaining seated*). Dear child! Had this happened a week ago, I could have made restitution, but now I am afraid my own property is not nearly worth what you have lost.

ELLIOT. That's not sure yet, John. The report about the mine may not be true.

ALLSTON (*bitterly*). No, no. Everything bad is true.

(*Enter* MRS. PEACOCK, *dragging* DR. PEACOCK *after her by the arm. The* DOCTOR *looks very sleepy.*)

MRS. P. (*breathessly*). I have found him! Here he is! (*Dragging him to* C., *and leaving him standing there alone.*) There, sir! Now, perhaps, you will tell all these people the same ridiculous story you have told me.

DR. P. (*yawning*). Now wait, Mrs. Peacock, you're going too fast. Nothing ridiculous about it. I fell (*yawns*) asleep. That's all. I think that's plain enough.

MRS. P. (*sternly*). And *I* think you have been guilty of either drunkenness, Peacock, or burglary, or both.

DR. P. Burglary! The woman's crazy.

(*Enter* JUDGE PETTIBONE C. DR. PEACOCK *goes to* PHILIP, *who explains to him, apart, what has happened.*)

JUDGE (*flustered and very important*). I have taken every precaution to arrest the robbers in their flight. In fact, I may say, I have left no avenue of escape unguarded In a case of this magnitude, it is of the utmost importance that every precaution should be taken, without the slightest hesitation. And, I may add, every precaution *has* been taken, and without the slightest hesitation on my part.

DR. P. (*yawning*). Hear! Hear!

JUDGE. And now, Mr. Vane, I understand that you were the only person present when the burglary was committed. Can you give me any information that may assist in the detection of the criminal?

VANE. I found —

ALLSTON (*springing up from his seat. To* VANE, *interrupting*). Stop! (*To* JUDGE.) You are wasting your time. You may call back your men. The criminal is in this room. (*Glancing at his wife.*)

JUDGE. Whom do you mean?
ALLSTON. Myself. *I* am the man.

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE. — *Same as Act I. Time, morning of following day.*

(*Enter* BARBARA C., *distressed and worried.*)

BARBARA. Oh, such a wretched night as we have had! Poor Uncle John! I believe the robbery must have affected his mind. *He* guilty of such a thing? Never! I wouldn't believe it if he said so a thousand times. Dear me! I wish I had never had any money. Yesterday we were all so happy, and now see what it has done. Uncle John will not say a word to a soul, and refuses to have Dora come into his room. I shall go mad if I stay here by myself and think about it. I *must* talk to somebody. (*Starts toward door* C.)

(*Enter* ELLIOT C.)

(*Rushing to meet him.*) O Mr. Elliot! I'm *so* glad to see you. What is the news?

ELLIOT (*as they come down*). Nothing much, my dear. I have just come from an interview with that pompous, self-satisfied, stupid personification of the law, Justice Pettibone, and I am enjoying the first rational sensation I have had since last night. A feeling of healthy irritation.

BARBARA. Does he believe Uncle John guilty?

ELLIOT. Oh, yes. Hasn't a doubt of it. He said that the idea that a human being should say he was guilty when he was not, was preposterous. However, after much objection on his part, I finally induced him to put off the hearing until to-morrow, and to allow your Uncle John to remain here in the house.

BARBARA. And is the sheriff, Conn O'Hara, to stay here too?

ELLIOT. Yes; Allston is to be under Conn's surveillance.

BARBARA. Poor Conn! He seems to feel dreadfully uncomfortable at being made to stand guard over his old employer. Have you seen Uncle John this morning?

ELLIOT. Yes, dear; and not a word would he say to me except, "Ned, old friend, if you love me, ask me nothing."

BARBARA. What *does* it all mean?

ELLIOT. Heaven only knows! I must go again and try to comfort him. (*Turning at the door.*) Keep a brave heart, Barbara, my girl. All may be well yet. (*Exit at door* R.)

BARBARA. What a comfort it is to have a man like that in the house — so kind! so thoughtful!

(*Enter* PHILIP C.)

PHILIP. Good-morning, dear.

BARBARA. O Philip, isn't it horrible?

PHILIP. Awful! I can't imagine why he did it.

BARBARA (*indignantly*). Philip! What do you mean? I am ashamed of you.

PHILIP. No, no, no. You mistake me. I can't imagine why he should *accuse* himself. We all know he never would *do* it.

BARBARA. Forgive me, dear, but I am so worried. Will he see Dora yet? (PHILIP *shakes his head.*) Why is it, Philip? There is something underneath it all that I don't understand. What *does* it all mean?

PHILIP. Don't ask me. I cannot tell you without betraying a secret. But time will cure it all, and we must *prove* him innocent now, in spite of himself. Barbara, darling, forgive me for speaking now. I am not selfish (*taking her hand*), but you are always first in my thoughts. Tell me, sweetheart, will you wear my ring?

BARBARA (*looking down*). Now that I haven't a penny in the world?

PHILIP. Now, more than ever.

BARBARA. You just said we must prove him innocent, in spite of himself. In spite of *my*self, Philip, I must wait until he is proved innocent. I have no heart to give until then. Think of *him*, work for *him*, prove him innocent, then come to me. (*Exit door* C.)

PHILIP. I'll do my best. God bless her heart!

(*Enter* DR. PEACOCK *door* R., *mysteriously.*)

DR. P. (*as he comes down, excitedly*). Philip? Just the man I want. (*Catching him by the arm and dragging him across to* R.) Come here. I want to talk to you. Can you keep a secret?

PHILIP. Of course I can.

DR. P. Now wait. You're going too fast. Perhaps you can. *Will* you keep a secret?

PHILIP. I will.

DR. P. Promise?

PHILIP. Yes, of course. What is it?

DR. P. Well, I'll tell you. Do you know why I fell asleep last night? (PHILIP *shakes his head.*) Guess!

PHILIP. Because you were sleepy.

DR. P. No, sir! Because I was drugged!

PHILIP. What do you mean?

DR. P. That's what I mean. Drugged. Drugged with my own medicine. Hoist with my own petard, by ginger!

PHILIP. How so?

DR. P. Listen! Last evening a certain man in this very room asked me for an opiate to relieve his pain. I gave it to him. And

I am convinced he poured some of it in my cup of tea while my attention was diverted.

PHILIP. But —

DR. P. Now wait. You're going too fast. At first I thought it was indigestion — for a moment, liver — but this morning I know by my condition that it was the drug. Now who do you suppose that man was?

PHILIP. Haven't the least idea.

DR. P. (*in stage whisper*). That man was — Langdon!

PHILIP. Langdon! What object could he have?

DR. P. He was concerned in this robbery, mark my word.

PHILIP. Oh, nonsense! But suppose he was, why drug *you?*

DR. P. Because he feared my watchful eye. Because he dreaded my keen perception. Because he was staying at my house, and didn't dare face me when he returned from the job, for fear I should detect his guilt at the first glance at his face.

PHILIP. You are perfectly certain you were drugged?

DR. P. Do you think, young man, after all these years of practice, I don't know the sensations that follow a large dose of laudanum? Well, I guess I do. Now what I'm coming to is this. That man is concerned in this thing in some way. I must stay here on the ground and watch him, without a word. *You* must take the next train to New York, get a detective, and bring him back here.

PHILIP. But, doctor —

DR. P. No "but" about it. You *must* go, and go quick too, if you want to catch that train. (*Looking at his watch.*)

PHILIP. But I don't know any detective.

DR. P. Well, I do. Hunt. Dick Hunt's the man. (*Giving him a slip of paper.*) There's his address. He's a good one. I've tried him; had occasion some years ago to look up the character of a — ahem! But that doesn't concern you. Come! Be off! (*Pushing him toward the door.*)

PHILIP. Will you explain my absence?

DR. P. (*still pushing*). Yes, yes, yes. But mind you (*stopping him at the door*), not a word to a mortal soul here about it.

(*Exit* PHILIP *door* L. *Enter* MRS. PEACOCK C. *She overhears the last sentence, "Not a word," etc., and stands inside the door waiting.*)

DR. P. There! That's done. Now I'll go for (*turns and sees his wife*) — the devil!

MRS. P. (*severely*). *To* the devil, you mean, Dr. Peacock.

DR. P. Nothing of the sort, madam. We are not talking of the same person.

MRS. P. Is there more than one of them, Dr. Peacock?

DR. P. (*testily*). There is, madam, but of the other sex.

MRS. P. I fail to catch your meaning, sir. However, I dare say you don't know what you mean yourself, after the disgraceful condition you were in last night.

DR. P. (*with dignity*). Mrs. Peacock, I have told you repeatedly your suspicions are unfounded. I drank nothing but a cup of tea.

MRS. P. *Then* this story about your being asleep was all a pretence, and you have some *motive* for deceiving me.

DR. P. Of course, of course. Now tell us the motive.

MRS. P. I will not gratify your curiosity.

DR. P. Suit yourself.

MRS. P. You don't mean to tell me you were not trying to deceive me?

DR. P. I don't mean to tell you anything.

MRS. P. (*angry*). Then I'll find out.

DR. P. Let's see you do it.

MRS. P. (*growing more angry*). Have a care, Peacock. Because John Allston has confessed, you needn't think that acquits you in my eyes.

DR. P. That's the only place where I'm guilty — in your eye.

MRS. P. Don't you be too sure. I think Judge Pettibone has his suspicions too.

DR. P. Judge Pettibone be —— Now wait. I'm going too fast.

MRS. P. (*working herself up*). What is there to disprove that you were an accessory to the deed?

DR. P. (*imitating her*). Nothing.

MRS. P. (*more angry*). What is there to disprove that Allston gave you the money to put in a safe place?

DR. P. (*imitating her*). Nothing.

MRS. P. What is there to disprove that your ill-gotten gains are at this moment in my house?

DR. P. (*imitating her*). You haven't got any house. It's my house.

MRS. P. (*starting toward door*). *I* believe it *is* there, Peacock.

DR. P. All right. (*Laughing.*)

MRS. P. (*backing toward door*). And I shall search the house till I find it, Peacock!

DR. P. (*laughing*). Blaze away!

MRS. P. (*in doorway*). And I sha'n't be long about it, either, Peacock!

DR. P. (*laughing*). Go it! Hoop la! (*Exit* MRS. PEACOCK *in a rage* C. *With change of manner.*) Now I suppose there are people in this world who would consider that woman one of the gentlest, sweetest, and most amiable of her sex. I can't agree with them. Thank Heaven she has got a job that will keep her busy for a *long* time. I sincerely hope she'll continue searching till she finds it. (*Taking handkerchief from pocket and stopping suddenly when about to blow his nose, holding up the knotted corner of the handkerchief.*) There you are again! (*Scratching his head.*) Now I'll be hanged if I can remember what I tied that knot for. Great thing, though. Now I *know* I've forgotten something, other-

wise it might never have occurred to me. (*As he replaces handkerchief.*) Can't fool away time over that now, however. Come to me later. Well, I've started Philip off, so that's settled. But this is a great responsibility for me. A great deal depends upon my behavior. I must show no sign of my suspicion, or when Philip comes back the bird will have flown. I must treat this fellow Langdon just as if nothing had happened. Be a sphinx, Peacock; that's it, a sphinx.

(*Enter* JUDGE PETTIBONE *and* LANGDON C.)

DR. P. (*with marked cordiality, and in a breezy manner*). Well, well, well! How is Mr. Langdon this morning?

LANGDON. Ah, doctor!

JUDGE. Dr. Peacock seems hilarious this morning. A little out of place, doctor, when we consider recent events.

DR. P. Nothing of the sort, sir! My customary way of greeting Mr. Langdon, sir. And if you intend to insinuate —

JUDGE (*interrupting*). A judge never insinuates, Dr. Peacock.

DR. P. A physician is never hilarious over suffering, Judge Pettibone.

LANGDON. There, gentlemen, you misunderstand one another. (*To* JUDGE.) I'm sure my friend the doctor is as sorry as you and I, judge, that Mr. Allston should have yielded to temptation.

DR. P. What's that? Bosh, sir! I don't believe he did it, not for a minute.

JUDGE. Are you aware that he confessed that he *did* do it, Dr. Peacock?

DR. P. I don't care if he confessed a hundred times, I wouldn't believe it.

JUDGE (*condescendingly*). I am afraid you would never make a judge, Dr. Peacock.

DR. P. Now wait. You're going too fast. They're making judges out of almost anything nowadays.

LANGDON. Your loyalty to your friend does you great credit, Dr. Peacock; but you must admit that, apart from his confession, the condition of Mr. Allston's own property would supply a reasonable motive for the deed. (*Looking at* JUDGE.)

JUDGE (*bowing*). A very strong point, Mr. Langdon. Your discernment does *you* great credit.

DR. P. Nonsense! Nothing to do with it.

JUDGE (*condescendingly*). Well, well, Dr. Peacock, we won't argue the case now.

DR. P. No; so I see. We'll decide it now, and argue it to-morrow. And I wouldn't be surprised if it were proved that Allston was in his own house all the time.

LANGDON. You forget, doctor, that you are hardly able to know about that. You were sound asleep.

DR. P. (*forgetting himself*). And why was I asleep, sir? It

was because — ahem. (*Aside.*) Be a sphinx, Peacock. (*Aloud.*) Because I *was*, sir.

JUDGE (*meaningly*). *If* you were!

DR. P. Fudge! Go talk to my wife!

(*Enter* ELLIOT L.)

JUDGE. Good-morning, Mr. Elliot. I called in to say that I shall require the presence of all the members of this household as witnesses to-morrow. (ELLIOT *bows.*) And I beg to remind you that Mr. Allston, in being allowed to remain in this house in the constable's charge, is, to a certain extent, on parole, and at your request. And I hope there will be no failure on his part to appear also.

ELLIOT (*stiffly*). You need have no anxiety on that score, sir.

LANGDON. Such things have happened, you know, Mr. Elliot.

ELLIOT (*turning upon him quickly*). I must trouble you to mind your own business. (*Pointing to door* C.) Good-morning.

(*Exit* LANGDON, *shrugging his shoulders, followed by* JUDGE, C. *Exit* DR. PEACOCK *after them, whistling softly.*)

(*Enter* ALLSTON *and* CONN O'HARA L.)

(ALLSTON, *with head bent and dejected bearing, walks slowly to table at* R., *and seats himself.* CONN *walks sheepishly to chair at* L., *sits on the edge, hat in hand, and throughout the scene is very ill at ease.*)

ELLIOT (*going to* ALLSTON; *then with his hand on* ALLSTON'S *shoulder*). John, old man, hasn't this gone about far enough?

ALLSTON. What do you mean?

ELLIOT. I mean this pretence that you are guilty.

ALLSTON. And why do you call it pretence?

ELLIOT. Because I *know you*, John Allston.

ALLSTON (*with emotion*). Don't, Ned, don't! For God's sake, don't! You are only making me more wretched.

ELLIOT. I am only trying to make you more reasonable. God knows I don't want to give you pain, but this thing must *not* go on. Why, man, your trial comes to-morrow.

ALLSTON. I know it. Let it come.

ELLIOT. And if you repeat this senseless, crazy confession of guilt —

ALLSTON (*interrupting*). Why should I not?

ELLIOT. Because it is not true. (*Taking him by the arm and bringing him to his feet.*) Look me in the eye, John. Will you say to me, face to face, man to man, friend to friend —

ALLSTON (*breaking away from him*). Not another word! (*Throwing himself into the chair, and burying his head in his arms.*) You are torturing me. (*Sobbing.*)

(*Enter* VANE *and* MISS ALLSTON C.)

ELLIOT. I can say no more.

MISS A. (*rushing to* ALLSTON). John! My dear brother! Why do you persist in this —

ALLSTON (*interrupting, taking her hand*). Eleanor, my sister, I know you mean it kindly, but you must ask me nothing.

MISS A. And may I not even try to comfort you?

ALLSTON. No, no. Not even that.

VANE (*who has found his way to* C., *after being left at the door by* MISS ALLSTON, *and who has been intently listening to the foregoing*). We are all wrong. It is not our place to try. There is but one comforter, but one confidant, for a man in such trouble.

ALLSTON (*quickly*). Whom do you mean?

VANE. Your wife, John.

ALLSTON. You will drive me mad. Anything but that! (*Rushes from the room, followed by* ELLIOT, *puzzled and distressed. Exeunt* L.)

VANE (*aside, shaking his head*). No light yet. I am still in the dark. Patience! Patience!

MISS A. (*to* CONN). Conn, you are forgetting your duty.

CONN (*still seated as before*). How's that, mum?

MISS A. I say you are forgetting your duty. You must follow Mr. Allston.

CONN (*still sitting*). Shure I t'ought he'd be back soon, mum.

MISS A. You should not let him go out of your sight.

CONN (*rising slowly*). Well, mum, if it's me juty, I'll do it; but, to my moind, me juty's a dir-r-ty piece o' wor-r-k for the likes o' me to be doin'. (*Exit* L.)

(MISS ALLSTON *leads* VANE *gently to arm-chair at* L., *and stands near him.*)

MISS A. (*sighing*). What can we do?

VANE. He should see his wife. What safer place to go for help? (*Sighs.*) His wife! How much the word means! She is his help, his hope, his faith, his bosom friend, his all in all!

MISS A. (*letting her hand fall upon his shoulder*). Would your wife be all that to you?

VANE. My wife? There must be no wife for such as I. (*Placing his hand upon hers as it rests upon his shoulder.*) Once I should have asked a noble woman to be all this, and more, to me — a woman true as faith, sweet as hope, kind as charity; but now (*releasing her hand, she still remaining standing by his side*), no wife for me! I'll hamper no unselfish life with what remains of me. No, no. I'll have no woman waste herself on me.

MISS A. (*kneeling beside the chair*). Not even if it be her dearest wish, has always been her dearest wish?

VANE. Does pity prompt her?

MISS A. (*taking his hands and placing one against each of her cheeks*). Does this seem like pity?

VANE (*rising, and drawing her to him*). At last. (*Looking upward.*) I ask no more than this. 'Tis dearer than the light. (*Exeunt* C.)

(*Enter* ALLSTON, *followed by* CONN, L.)

(ALLSTON *has some papers in his hand. Goes to table* R.; *sits and arranges them, and writes.* CONN *resumes former position. Soon leans back in his chair and pretends to be asleep, and snores loudly, then looks round sideways at* ALLSTON, *who continues writing and pays no attention to what has happened.*)

CONN. Misther Allston!

ALLSTON (*without looking up*). Yes, Conn.

CONN. Did you hear me shnor-r-e?

ALLSTON (*as before*). I did.

CONN. Well, it's asleep I am, d'ye moind?

ALLSTON (*as before*). All right. (*Continues writing.*)

CONN (*after having leaned back in his chair and pretended sleep for a time, then looking at* ALLSTON *as before, then aside*). What's the matter wid the man? Shure he has no brains! (*To* ALLSTON.) Hist! (*Pointing over his shoulder with his thumb toward door* C.) Now's your chance. Shure it's asleep I am. Get out o' this.

(ELLIOT *and* BARBARA *appear at door* C. *He points to* ALLSTON, *then gently pushes her toward him, then disappears.*)

(*Enter* BARBARA C.)

(*Aside.*) The stoopid looney! Will I have to *trow* him out? (*Rises, turns, sees* BARBARA, *and resumes original attitude.* BARBARA *goes softly to* ALLSTON; *puts her arm round his neck from behind, and kisses him.*)

ALLSTON. Barbara! What do you want, my dear?

BARBARA. Nothing, Uncle John, but to say "good-morning."

ALLSTON. Thank you, my child.

BARBARA. I have just left poor Dora. (ALLSTON *turns away.*) She is so miserable! She would not speak to me. She had thrown herself upon the floor, and has been lying there for hours, sobbing as if her heart would break.

ALLSTON (*springing to his feet*). Send her to me.

BARBARA. I will. (*Runs quickly off. Exit* C.)

ALLSTON. She must not suffer so. My poor wife! I must at least be kind. (*To* CONN.) Conn, my man, will you trust me? Will you leave me alone here for a while?

CONN (*springing up with alacrity*). Shure I will that, sir, if ye have the mind to do it that way.

(*Exit quickly* C. ALLSTON *remains seated at table with his back to the door.*)

(*Enter* MRS. ALLSTON C.)

MRS. A. (*standing inside door*). I have come, John.

ALLSTON (*without turning*). Come here, by me. I have something to say to you, my child. (MRS. ALLSTON *goes to him and stands by his chair.*) I have no wish to give you pain by speaking of what has happened. It is enough for me to say that after what I discovered last night you can never be the same to me again.

MRS. A. (*falling on her knees beside his chair, and leaning her head on its arm*). Don't say that, John. You will break my heart!

ALLSTON (*stroking her hair, speaking very gently*). There, there, my child. You must be reasonable. I did not send for you to talk about the past. Merely to say to you that I forgive you. Yes, forgive you freely.

MRS. A. (*sobbing violently*). Don't speak like that, John ; I cannot bear it.

ALLSTON (*soothingly*). Come, come, this will do no good, Dora. Calm yourself, my child. I can appreciate the temptation you were under, but (*breaking down*), my darling, my darling! why did you not trust my love ? Why did you not confide in me ?

MRS. A. (*springing to her feet, speaking with spirit*). That isn't fair, John! I would have confided in you. I would have told you all before I married you, but you would not hear me ; you would not listen.

ALLSTON (*aside*). I see! She thinks I do not know her connection with the robbery. (*To her.*) Well, well, never mind ; it is past now. I have said my say. (*Turns to table.*)

MRS. A. (*after walking dejectedly part way to door* C., *then turning*). John!

ALLSTON (*without looking round*). Well?

MRS. A. You say I can never be the same to you again. 'Twill break my heart, but I will try to bear it. But for the sake of the old love (*coming nearer to him*), for the sake of the love I shall always feel for you, take back before it is too late this mad assertion that you are guilty.

ALLSTON (*turning and looking at her fixedly*). And let my wife take my place?

MRS. A. Take your place? What do you mean?

ALLSTON. If I do not plead guilty, I must testify.

MRS. A. What of that?

ALLSTON (*springing to his feet and catching her by the hand, then almost fiercely*). What of that? Will you never understand that I know all (*taking the combination paper from his pocket and holding it before her*), and that, as a witness, I must show them *this?* That I must prove *your* guilt? (*Releasing her hand.*)

MRS. A. (*aside*). Philip's paper! I see it all. (*To him, breathlessly.*) And that is why you feel so toward me?

ALLSTON (*his back turned to her*). And is not that enough? that you should sacrifice my trust?

MRS. A. And it is not my past — my unhappy life ?

ALLSTON (*turning sharply*). No, no ! If that were all, I'd love you more than ever. 'Twould be my greatest happiness to make you forget the past.

MRS. A. (*laughing hysterically, stretching her arms towards him*). John ! John !

ALLSTON (*springing to her and taking her in his arms*). Dora ! What does this mean ? Have I wronged you ? Speak to me.

MRS. A. (*laughing and sobbing*). I gave — that paper — to Philip to get the letter for me — from the safe — I knew nothing of the robbery — nothing. That's all, John.

ALLSTON (*folding her closely to him*). My wife again ! My darling ! (*Turning quickly toward door* C., *one arm still about her waist, her head upon his shoulder, calls loudly, laughing in his excitement.*) Elliot ! Vane ! Eleanor ! All of you ! Come ! Quick !

(*Enter quickly* ELLIOT, VANE, MISS ALLSTON, BARBARA, DR. *and* MRS. PEACOCK C.)

Listen to me, all of you.

(*Enter* JUDGE *and* LANGDON, *who stand within the door* C.)

When I said last night that I was guilty, I lied. I am innocent ! I swear it on my honor !

LANGDON. That is for the court to decide.

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE.— *The trial justice's office. Very plainly furnished. A large table, with green enamel-cloth top at back* C. *Shabby. Behind it a chair. At* L., *near front, a slightly raised place with rail for witness-stand. A table at* R., *chairs, and perhaps a settee about the room. The general effect to be that of the office of any trial justice of a small country town. Nothing imposing or elegant about it. Door at back to right of large table, and windows to right of door and behind table.*

(*Enter* JUDGE, *carrying bundle of papers, and* LANGDON.)

JUDGE (*as they come down*). I quite agree with you, Mr. Langdon. I can conceive of no reason for his denial of his guilt now, in the face of his previous confession, except that he has succeeded in persuading Vane not to tell what he knows.

LANGDON. That's the point exactly, judge.

JUDGE. But there is one thing that puzzles me, and that is, how can Vane have anything to conceal? Being blind, he can have seen nothing.

LANGDON. You forget, judge, for the moment, that the loss of one faculty is sure to make the others more acute.

JUDGE. True, true; he may have heard something.

LANGDON. Yes, possibly. But there are other senses besides hearing.

JUDGE (*looking very wise*). That, too, had occurred to me. He might have smelled something.

LANGDON. Perhaps so. But there are still other senses.

JUDGE (*counting on his fingers in thought, then suddenly*). I have it! (*Very wisely.*) He must have touched something — felt something that he recognized.

LANGDON (*with mock admiration*). Wonderful discernment! Judge Pettibone, I am amazed; yes, sir, amazed at your shrewdness, your perception. The idea would have occurred to none but a keen, able mind.

JUDGE (*much complimented*). Thank you, Mr. Langdon. But you must remember that the exercise of a judge's duties tends to make the mind alert.

LANGDON. Allow me to say, judge, that such remarkable alertness of mind as your own must have been to a certain extent inborn. (JUDGE *bows complacently.*) But I ought to tell you that Suzette, the maid-servant, says that she is sure Allston was not in the house at ten o'clock on the night of the burglary, because his fur-trimmed overcoat was not in its usual place in the hall.

JUDGE. I have an idea. In his struggles with Allston, Vane may have felt some part of this overcoat.

LANGDON. Wonderful! Marvellous! I wonder what became of the handkerchief with which he was gagged?

JUDGE (*excitedly*). What's that? what's that? The handkerchief? (*Wisely.*) Ah, yes! I had thought of that too. I shall ask. (*Looking at his watch.*) Bless my soul! It is nearly time for the trial, and I must prepare my papers. (*Goes to large table at back and arranges papers, etc.*)

LANGDON (*aside*). His *mind* is already prepared, thanks to his able assistant. (*Pointing to himself.*) I wouldn't have made such a bad judge myself.

(*Enter* ELLIOT *and* DR. PEACOCK.)

ELLIOT. Good-morning, Judge Pettibone. I want to say to you that, at my friend Allston's request, I shall conduct his defence.

(ELLIOT *goes to table at* R. *and arranges papers, etc.*)

JUDGE. Very well, Mr. Elliot; but I regret that you haven't a more promising case.

DR. P. Bosh!

JUDGE. What did you remark, Dr. Peacock?

DR. P. Nothing of importance, sir.

JUDGE. That's what I supposed, Dr. Peacock.

DR. P. (*huffily*). What do you mean by that, sir? Do you mean to insinuate —

JUDGE (*interrupting*). I must again remind you, Dr. Peacock, that a judge never insinuates.

DR. P. Humph! (*Notices that* LANGDON *is laughing at him. To him.*) And what do you find to laugh at, I'd like to know? Have a care, sir, or I'll — (*Aside.*) Now wait, I'm going too fast. Be a sphinx, Peacock!

(LANGDON *strolls back to* JUDGE, *and converses with him apart.*)

(*Enter* BARBARA. *She goes quickly to* DR. PEACOCK, *and talks to him aside.*)

BARBARA. Doctor, can't you tell me something about Philip? He went away yesterday in the train, and Suzette says he took his valise with him.

DR. P. (*looking wise*). Probably some important business took him to the city, my dear. Possibly something you wouldn't understand.

BARBARA. But your wife told me you could tell me all about it.

DR. P. She did, did she?

BARBARA. She said you could if you would. And O doctor! she didn't say so, but she implied that Philip (*sob*) had run away. (*Sobbing.*)

DR. P. Confound the woman! There, there, my dear, I don't mean you. (*Growing very uneasy.*) There, don't cry — there's a good girl — please don't cry, I —

BARBARA (*between sobs*). I wouldn't, doctor, but they will suspect him next, and I couldn't bear that.

DR. P. (*trying to comfort her, himself very uneasy*). Now wait — there! For Heaven's sake don't cry! If you cry I'll — you're going too fast. (*Suddenly catching her by the arm.*) Here, I'll tell you all about it. (*Drawing her to one side.*)

BARBARA. Well?

DR. P. (*very mysteriously*). He has gone to New York for a detective. There, not a word to a soul! Remember!

BARBARA. Oh, I am so glad! Whom do you suspect?

DR. P. Hum! Ah! Well! (*With great mystery.*) Are you sure you won't tell?

BARBARA (*eagerly*). Yes, yes; I promise.

DR. P. (*aside*). Be a sphinx, Peacock! (*To her.*) Hope to die?

BARBARA. Yes, yes, yes. Who is it?

DR. P. My wife. (*Aside.*) Two can play at that game.

(*Enter* VANE *and* MISS ALLSTON, *followed by* CONN *and* MR. *and* MRS. ALLSTON, *then* MARSH *and* SUZETTE. ALLSTON *remains near the door with* CONN, *others take seats about the room.*)

JUDGE (*looking at his watch*). The court is now ready to proceed with the hearing. Constable O'Hara, have you the prisoner here?

(CONN *and* ALLSTON *walk to* C., *in front of* JUDGE'S *table.*)

CONN. He is here, your honor. (*Goes back to original position.*)

JUDGE. You are here, John Allston, charged with having, on the thirteenth of this month, taken from your own safe the sum of sixty thousand dollars belonging to your ward, and with having assaulted and bound Mr. Daniel Vane, who was in your office at the time, in order that the deed might seem to be that of thieves or burglars, and you be thus enabled to use the money for your own purposes. How do you plead in this matter? Guilty or not guilty?

ALLSTON. Not guilty. (*Returns to position beside* CONN.)

JUDGE (*reading from a paper*). Are the following persons present? Dora Allston, Eleanor Allston, Barbara Vane, Daniel Vane, Lorenzo Peacock, Arthur Langdon, Suzette-er-er-Ek-you-er.

SUZETTE. Ecuer. (*Pronouncing it properly.*)

JUDGE. Never mind about the initials. Philip Broughton. (*A pause.*) Philip Broughton not here?

ELLIOT. He went away unexpectedly before he knew that your honor would require his presence.

JUDGE. Humph! Be good enough to hold up your right hands (*mumbling customary oath, ending with*) so help you, God. Mr. Langdon, will you take the stand? (*Indicating witness-box.* LANGDON *crosses, and takes his place as witness.*) Did you, on the afternoon of the thirteenth, make a payment to John Allston for the purchase of property belonging to his ward?

LANGDON. I did, sir.

JUDGE. What was the form of this payment?

LANGDON. It was in bills to the amount of—

ELLIOT. (*interrupting*). Excuse me, your honor, we admit payment of the money.

JUDGE. Very well. You may stand down, Mr. Langdon. (LANGDON *takes a chair near witness-stand, slightly behind, and to the right of it.*) Mrs. Allston, will you be kind enough to take the stand? (MRS. A., *standing beside her husband, quickly raises his hand to her lips, then, after a glance at him, takes her position in the witness-stand.*) Mrs. Allston, do you know whether or not your husband was in the house at ten o'clock on the night of the thirteenth?

MRS. A. (*speaking hurriedly*). He went out just before ten, but it was to look for Dr. Peacock. The doctor had disappeared, and his wife was alarmed about it, and—

JUDGE (*interrupting*). Never mind about that.

DR. P. (*springing from his chair*). But why don't you mind about that? That's the truth. I can explain.

JUDGE (*sarcastically*). Excuse me, sir, but may I ask whom you represent here?

DR. P. I represent a man called common-sense. Do you know him?

JUDGE. I know a man called uncommon *lack* of sense, Dr. Peacock.

DR. P. It's a wise man that knows himself. I congratulate you, Judge Pettibone.

JUDGE. If you make any more disturbance, I shall be obliged to have you ejected from the courtroom, sir. (*To* MRS. A.) So, Mrs. Allston, your husband was not in the house at ten o'clock on the night of the thirteenth?

MRS. A. He was not.

JUDGE. That is all for the present, madam. (MRS. ALLSTON *resumes her former position.*) Soo-zette Ek-you-er, take the stand.

SUZETTE (*on her way to witness-stand*). Ecuer, monsieur.

JUDGE. I don't care whether it's A Q A or X Y Z. You are a domestic in Mr. Allston's house, are you not?

SUZETTE. I am, sare.

JUDGE. Do you know where Mr. Allston's overcoat — the one trimmed with fur — is usually left by him when he is in the house?

SUZETTE. He leaves eet on ze ar-rm of a seat zat ees een ze front hall.

JUDGE. Were you in the house at ten o'clock night before last?

SUZETTE. Yes, sare. I was in ze house.

JUDGE. Did you happen to notice whether the overcoat was in the usual place at that time?

SUZETTE At ten o'clock it was not zere, but it was zere at after ten a few minutes.

JUDGE (*to* ELLIOT). You have the witness, Mr. Elliot.

ELLIOT. How do you know it was ten o'clock?

SUZETTE. It ees always at ten o'clock zat I turn down ze light in ze front hall.

ELLIOT. How did it happen that you returned to the hall shortly after ten, when you say you saw the coat?

SUZETTE. I took up-stairs ze sack of Miss Vane, and on my way down again I saw ze overcoat was zere.

ELLIOT. That will do. (SUZETTE *resumes her seat.*)

JUDGE. Mr. Vane, if you please. (MISS ALLSTON *leads* VANE *to witness-stand, then returns.*) You were in Mr. Allston's office on the night of the thirteenth — day before yesterday — at ten o'clock, Mr. Vane?

VANE. I was.

JUDGE. Please describe what took place.

VANE. I was seated in my chair; was suddenly seized from behind, gagged by one person, while I was held by another, then bound in my chair.

JUDGE. Ahem! Then there were two persons.

VANE. As nearly as I can tell, there were.

JUDGE. This may account, Mr. Elliot, for the *unexpected* absence of Mr. Philip Broughton.

DR. P. (*jumping from his chair*). Oh, you make me tired!

JUDGE (*rapping on his table*). Silence, silence!

DR. P. (*excitedly*). But I can explain it all.

JUDGE. Be good enough to resume your seat, and keep still.

DR. P. But I know all about it, I tell you. If you'll only listen to my story, I'll—

JUDGE (*interrupting*). Not now. At the proper time you shall be given an opportunity to unfold your tale, Dr. *Peacock*. (DR. PEACOCK *resumes his seat in high dudgeon.*) Now, Mr. Vane, continue.

VANE. I have told you all.

JUDGE. But, during the incident you have described, you may have noticed something?

VANE. You forget that I am blind.

JUDGE. Did you hear nothing, then?

VANE. Nothing more than the sound caused by opening the safe.

JUDGE. Did you not hear a footstep that you recognized?

VANE. I heard no footsteps at all.

JUDGE. Did you touch or feel anything that seemed familiar?

VANE. I refuse to answer.

JUDGE. You must answer.

VANE (*with reluctance*). I felt the coat-sleeve of one of the men.

JUDGE. Well, what was there about it, that you noticed?

VANE. It was trimmed with fur.

JUDGE. Did it seem familiar—like a coat you had felt before? (VANE *hesitates.*) Well, I am waiting for your answer.

VANE. It did.

JUDGE. Like what coat that you had felt before? (VANE *hesitates.*) Come!

VANE. John Allston's.

JUDGE. What happened after this?

VANE. Philip Broughton came in and released me, and then went for help.

JUDGE. And what became of the cloth or handkerchief with which you were gagged? Do you know?

VANE. I put it in my pocket.

JUDGE. Where is it now?

VANE. In my pocket.

JUDGE. Produce it. (VANE *reluctantly produces handkerchief.* Dr. PEACOCK *starts to take it.*) Never mind, Dr. Peacock. You may sit down again. (*To* CONN.) O'Hara, please hand that handkerchief to Mrs. Allston. (CONN. *does so.* MRS. A. *steps forward to receive it from him.*) Be good enough to examine it, madam. (*As soon as* MRS. A. *receives the handkerchief she glances once quickly at it, and stifles a scream.*) Well, what can you tell me about it? (MRS. A. *remains silent.*) You must answer me, madam. Do you know whose handkerchief it is?

MRS. A. Yes.

JUDGE. Well, go on. Whose is it?

MRS. A. (*breaking down completely*). My husband's. (ELLIOT *goes to her to reassure her.*)

JUDGE. That will do, madam. Thank you. (ELLIOT *leads her back to her former position.*)

VANE (*from witness-stand, with vehemence*). Hear me. You *must* hear me. It was John Allston's overcoat, but I know it was not John Allston. *I know it.*

JUDGE. How do you know that?

VANE. I do not know how I know it, but I am sure of it.

JUDGE. I am afraid that is hardly evidence, Mr. Vane.

ELLIOT (*excitedly*). All his testimony so far has been his impressions. Why is this conviction of his not evidence?

JUDGE. Because he can give no reason for it. At least, I suppose he cannot. Mr. Vane, can you tell me *why* you are so sure that the man was not John Allston?

VANE. I cannot. Alas! I cannot. (*These words to be spoken in a distracted, bewildered, distressed way, as of a man trying in vain to remember.*)

ELLIOT (*aside*). Poor John! Poor John!

JUDGE. That is all, Mr. Vane.

(VANE, *stepping down from the witness-stand, trips and staggers a few steps forward, and* LANGDON, *who has risen from his seat near the witness-stand, and is part way across the stage, turns and springs to support him, catching him by his outstretched hands.* MISS ALLSTON, *meanwhile, has hurried to* VANE'S *assistance, but, being a little later than* LANGDON, *passes behind him and* VANE *to* VANE'S — *and the stage — left.*)

VANE (*holding hard to* LANGDON'S *hands, and dragging him toward* C., *crying out in intense excitement*). Who is this man? Help! Hold him! These are the HANDS that gagged me. I swear it.

(LANGDON *violently jerks away his right hand from* VANE'S *grasp, and raises it to strike him,* VANE *still clinging to his left hand.*)

MISS A. (*throwing her arm across* VANE, *from her position at his left, and facing* LANGDON). Coward! Isn't once enough?

LANGDON (*turning toward the left to face the* JUDGE). Will your honor convict a gentleman on such evidence as this?

(*At* VANE'S *speech, "Who is this man," etc.,* PHILIP *and* HUNT *enter and walk quietly to* LANGDON'S *right side, he, in his excitement, not noticing them.* HUNT *stands next* LANGDON, PHILIP *next* HUNT.)

HUNT (*tapping* LANGDON *on the shoulder*). How long have you been a gentleman, Tommy Drake?

LANGDON (*recognizing him — aside*). Hunt! The game's up.

HUNT. Ever since you left Sing-Sing a month ago? Eh?

(MARSH *and* SUZETTE *start to steal from the room.*) Stop that other one, somebody! I need you, Jerry, my boy.

CONN (*collaring* MARSH). O'Hara's awake, me darlin'. Do you want the gurrul, mister?

HUNT. No, never mind her now. Let her go.

(*Exit* SUZETTE.)

JUDGE (*who has come down*). Who is this man? (*Indicating* HUNT.)

PHILIP. This is Mr. Hunt, a celebrated detective from New York.

JUDGE. Ah, indeed!

DR. P. (*with unction*). Yes, indeed, Judge Pettibone!

JUDGE. And do you think you recognize this gentleman, Mr. Hunt?

HUNT. Well, rather, judge. It was I who had him sent to Sing-Sing ten years ago, and he only came out last month. I suspected who he was when Mr. Broughton here described him to me as we came down in the train.

LANGDON. Suppose I *have* served my term, what then? There is no proof that I had anything to do with this job.

VANE. Except mine.

(*Enter* MRS. PEACOCK, *much excited, carrying in her arms the bundles of bank-notes.*)

MRS. P. Where is he? Let me find him! O Peacock, Peacock!

DR. P. What's the matter now, Rosy?

MRS. P. (*holding up the bundles*). What's the matter? Here's the money! That's what's the matter. And I found it in *your* house, Peacock! Thank Heaven, it's not *my* house, Peacock!

HUNT. Has this gentleman — Mr. Langdon, I believe — access to the house, madam?

MRS. P. He has indeed, sir. He is my guest, sir. (*Turning to* DOCTOR.) And to think, Peacock, that you should try to implicate a guest by hiding these in the mattress of his bed.

HUNT. Will you allow me to look at them, madam? (*After a hasty examination.*) I thought so. Queer! (*To* LANGDON.) Same old game, Tommy. (*Quietly slips handcuffs on to* LANGDON'S *wrists.*)

JUDGE. Is there anything peculiar about the money, Mr. Hunt?

HUNT. Counterfeit. That's all.

JUDGE. Counterfeit? Bless my soul! You don't say so!

(*Takes the packages and goes quickly to his table and sits down, and becomes absorbed in examining the bills.* MRS. PEACOCK, *after a glance of horror at her husband, follows the* JUDGE.)

HUNT. Well, Drake, that's the most novel way of circulating counterfeit money I ever heard of. The idea does you credit, Tommy, even if it didn't work.

LANGDON. Yes; it didn't work. Accidents will happen. (*Speaking as* HUNT *leads him off.*) Good-by, doctor. Hope

you'll sleep like a baby long as you live. Pleasant dreams Mr. Vane. Better luck with you next time. (*To* ALLSTON.) Delightfully smooth transaction, Mr. Allston, wasn't it? (*As he comes to* MRS. P.) Don't change your opinion of your husband, Mrs. Peacock. He's bad — bad as they make 'em. (*To* JUDGE.) Judge, better be careful of that mind of yours, — so alert, you know, — may get away.

(*Exeunt* HUNT *and* LANGDON, CONN *and* MAISE. ALLSTON *and* MRS. ALLSTON *come down, his arm around her.*)

ELLIOT (*shaking hands with* ALLSTON). John, old friend, the sky is clear again.

ALLSTON (*looking at his wife*). Yes, thank God.

VANE (*shaking* ALLSTON'S *hand.*) John, it's a warm hand and an honest hand.

DR. P. (*who has been wiping his eyes with his handkerchief, stopping suddenly with handkerchief held before him.*) Damn it! There it is again. Now what the devil did I tie that knot for? Nothing I guess. Now wait. I'm going too fast. (*Taking a letter from his pocket.*) Now I know. (*To* ALLSTON.) Allston, I got this letter for you at the post-office, day before yesterday morning. Tied this knot to remind me to give it to you. Great things, these knots. Should probably have forgotten —

ALLSTON (*who has opened letter*). What's this! "Rumor about the mine all a mistake! Doing better than ever." Dora darling, there's not a cloud left.

MRS. A. And there will never be another, John dear, as long as we live.

PHILIP (*beside* BARBARA). Barbara! Have you got my ring?

BARBARA (*holding up her left hand with the ring on*). Yes, dear. Here it is. (*They embrace.*)

(VANE *is walking slowly towards the door, leaning on* MISS ALLSTON'S *arm. They pause, when* ELLIOT *speaks.*)

ELLIOT (*turning toward* JUDGE). Your honor?

JUDGE (*still engrossed in the bills*). Hm-m-m.

ELLIOT. How about the prisoner? Is he released?

JUDGE. What's that, what's that? The prisoner? Bless my soul! Ahem! (*Resuming judicial manner.*) In view of the remarkable facts which I have so recently discovered —

DR. P. Now wait. You're going too fast.

JUDGE. Why so, Dr. Peacock?

DR. P. (*with great pride*). I discovered those facts. *You* never discovered anything that *I* ever heard of.

JUDGE. Ahem! In view of the facts so recently discovered, I shall dismiss the case. The prisoner is discharged, and the property reverts to THE TRUSTEE.

CURTAIN.

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AN AUTOGRAPH LETTER.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

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ACT III. At Staunton's again. Locking the stable door. White lies and white lilacs. A confession. "*The letter never reached John Master's hands.*" For love's sake. "*He must be told.*" A daughter's happiness. "She will marry the man she loves, but for you." A sacrifice and a promise. FACE TO FACE. "I came to fling his treachery in his face, but it is the face of a dead man." False to the last. "For her sake, not yours, I lied." A noble foe. Young love and old. Explained at last. "I am no man's wife." THE GARNERING OF THE GRAIN.

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Lapse of five years between Prologue and First Act.

ACT I. SCENE 1. Johnson's house. Surrounded by wealth. Sambo in trouble. Return of Seth Randolph. A murder prevented by a mirror. Drucilla's courage. "Rats." Seth runs the establishment. SCENE 2. Interview between Sambo and Lucy. "Hev you got the valerian cremens, or are you clean gone crazy?" SCENE 3. The blind miller and his family. Jacob Johnson again. His demand for the hand of Mabel. The refusal. Jacob's threat. Edward and Mabel. Elias the oath-bound. Face to face. "For God's sake, who are you?" "Elias Amsden, the lad ye bound by an oath."

ACT II. SCENE 1. Interior of mill. Elias and Edward. The hidden money. Elias and his secret. "O, money! money! you are the bane of my life; but I worship you as a god. SCENE 2. Sambo and Lucy again. "Lor a mighty! who crushed de tea set? Who broke down de box? Who de—" A ludicrous scene. SCENE 3. Jacob and Drucilla. The wolf and the lamb. Mabel pleads for her parents. Jacob's demand. Seth interferes. Edward and Elias pay Raymond's notes. Jacob's discovery. "Every dollar of that money is a base counterfeit." Deeper in the toils than ever. Seth Randolph's remorse. Elias driven to despair. "O, I be doomed — doomed."

ACT III. SCENE 1. Two rogues well met. Plan to secure Mabel. Seth refuses to act. Face to face with Elias. His curse. Jacob's villainy. A diabolical plot. SCENE 2. Turned into the streets. Phillip's trust in the Lord. "He will guide us through the wilderness like as he did the Israelites of old, if we are not afeered to trust him." Discovery by Lucy. A friend in need. "Now you just follow me and I'll take you home in half a jiffy." SCENE 3. Mabel and the letter. The hound still upon the track. Mother and daughter. "Then, though I crush my heart in doing it, I will marry Jacob Johnson." SCENE 4. Jacob starts to burn the mill. SCENE 5. Interior of mill. Edward in hiding. Elias contemplates suicide in order to reveal the oath. Seth and Jacob. The check. The drugged wine. Seth outwitted. "O, I am lost! lost!" Jacob fires the mill. Storm, flames and smoke. Seth recovers. Locked in. To the rescue of Elias. Edward beneath the trap. A double rescue. Seth Randolph saved, but dying. "Let — let me speak! Ja— —Jacob — O, God! — he — Jacob — he done this — he —"

ACT IV. SCENE 1. Mabel and Lucy. Phillip's anxiety, Off to the rescue. "Lead the way, Betty, and I'll follow you with the strength of a giant." SCENE 2. Confession and death of Seth Randolph. "Place me where the birds can sing over me, and where streaks of sunshine can reach my grave." SCENE 3. Drucilla and Jacob. The dove in the eagle's claw. Elias to the rescue. Phillip, Mrs. Raymond and Lucy. Elias attempts suicide. Timely arrival of Edward. "Kill the fatted calf, the prodigal has returned." Jacob in the toils. Return of the money. A happy termination.

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SYNOPSIS.

SCENE.— Dr. Baxter's Office. Mary Ann and the Professor. A scientific breakfast. Patients. A sweet young thing of fifty. Mary Ann romances. The old dude. More patients. A back number. Getting ready for the operation. Roxanna and the Doctor. Greek meets Greek. Electro-motive force *vs.* a female tongue. The "gossimeres." The current begins to work. Woolley has a very strange feeling. Charged with electricity. "I never charge, but take cash down." Filling the cabinets. A little backward in coming forward. Dorothy's shyness. "What, get in there with two men!" Mary Ann sacrificed to propriety. Roxanna and the Doctor again. Getting the mitten. "You press the button, and I'll do the rest." The current full on. Groans of the wounded. After the battle. Old maids and old dudes made new. Roxanna's work undone. "It's a deep laid plot!" Celebrating the event. "The dude who couldn't dance." Mary Ann and "The Irish Jubilee." It is in the air and Roxanna catches it. A terrible catastrophe. The deaf old gentlemen gets overdone. The Professor adopts the old infant. Marrying and giving in marriage. The "invention" pronounced a grand success.

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